



# State Enhanced 9-1-1

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Washington Military Department  
Emergency Management Division

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## Linking Emergency Communications Systems

### **What is Enhanced 911?**

The emergency phone number, 9-1-1, is truly a lifesaver. Nine-one-one provides direct access to police, fire, and medical emergency responders. Many of us have dialed this number and have benefited from the service. Our state offers enhanced 9-1-1 services. An Enhanced 9-1-1 (E911) system automatically displays the caller's name, phone number, and location on a computer screen in the 9-1-1 communications center. Callers who may be choking or have difficulty speaking can now gain help. Aid can be directed to the displayed address without a word being spoken.

Some phones however, because of technology limitations, cannot pass on location information. These include cellular phones and phones on some privately owned telephone systems.

### **E911 Benefits**

E911 dramatically increases the lifesaving potential of the public safety response system, particularly when the caller is unable to verbally give directions or supply other location information.

All telephones, including coin-operated and card-activated phones, are part of the E9-1-1 system. In Washington, when the three-digit emergency number, 9-1-1, is dialed:

- The E911 system routes the call based on the caller's location.
- The call is answered at a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), where emergency services are dispatched to the caller's location. Presently 87 PSAPs operate in Washington.
- A trained telecommunicator at the PSAP assesses the caller's need using the emergency information automatically displayed for quality assurance.
- The telecommunicator dispatches the appropriate emergency service to the caller's location.
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### **Background and Program**

Chapter 38.52, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) defines the role of the state E911 Program. The E911 Program coordinates and facilitates the local planning and installation of these systems; seeks advice from the E911 Advisory Committee; and, recommends taxing levels to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

The State E911 Office also provides financial, technical and public educational assistance to local government and guidance on a national level in building standards that will improve Washington E911 systems. The long-term goal of the state E911 Program is to ensure that citizens of the state are served by E911 emergency communications systems. The E911 Advisory Committee's role is to assist the Program in establishing operational standards and in developing training programs and technical guidelines for viable and compatible systems statewide.

### **The E911 Tax**

Chapter 82.14B, RCW authorizes counties and the state to assess E911 taxes on telecommunications services. There are four components to the E911 tax:

1. A state tax of 20-cents per month on wireline telecommunications--the majority to be distributed to counties on an as-need basis.
2. A state tax of 20-cents per month on wireless telecommunications--the majority to be distributed to counties on an as-need basis.
3. A county tax of up to 50 cents per month on wireline telecommunications (King County imposes a 35 cent per month tax) to support E911 at the county level.
4. A county tax of 50 cents per month on wireless telecommunications to mitigate the impact of wireless systems.

These taxes are collected and remitted by the telecommunications companies.

The State E911 Program of the Washington State Military Department works with the department's Emergency Management Division to integrate E911 into the emergency response systems serving the citizens across the state.

### **Contact**

For more information, please call Robert Oenning, State E911 Administrator, (253) 572-7011.

Visit the State E911 website at:

<http://www.wa.gov/wsem/5-e911/911index.htm>